

supervision from doctors, the nearest of whom may be located hundreds of miles distant, it is imperative that they be highly trained, not only in southern nursing practices techniques but also in fields such as diagnosis, drug prescription, X-ray interpretation, midwifery, and how to cope with emergencies of many kinds.

The nurse-practitioner program at the University of Alberta provided training in these needed skills, and nurses from remote areas learned much of great value to them and, as a result, saved many lives and reduced considerable suffering. It therefore comes as complete shock to find that Health and Welfare is discontinuing its support of the nurse-practitioner program. While the Liberal Government has millions of dollars to spend on imposing official bilingualism in the North, how, Sir, can it be so callous as to cut out the training programs for nurses who serve in an area where the national mortality rate, for instance, is nearly double the national average?

● (1115)

Mr. Speaker: I must interrupt the Hon. Member. His time has expired.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

NATIONAL REVENUE

REASSIGNMENT OF DEPUTY MINISTER

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw the disgraceful and cowardly spectacle of the Government sacking the Deputy Minister of National Revenue in the hope of distracting attention from the complete abdication of responsibility of the Minister. In view of the fact that the Minister of National Revenue refused pointedly on seven separate occasions in one day during Question Period in the House of Commons to back his Deputy Minister, will he deal honestly with Members of the House of Commons now and tell us in a straightforward way what was his recommendation to the Prime Minister? Did he recommend the transfer of his Deputy Minister?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ho, ho, ho, ho! Where are they this morning?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member were sincere in his desire to stand up for the Deputy Minister and to show his respect for him, he would not have said that we have

sacked him. He knows that this is a way of showing his contempt for that man, and that is not our position.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, on the strength of the Minister's performance to date, I can understand why the Prime Minister does not want to allow him to answer questions.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put my supplementary question to the Minister. We will see whether or not the Minister of National Revenue will attempt to hide and refuse to give answers to this question. In view of the repeated revelations over the course of the past several months that ordinary Canadians have suffered because of the Minister's gross neglect of his responsibilities, I would like to ask him what personal responsibility he feels that he carries as Minister for the conduct and activities of the officials of his Department. What personal responsibility does he have as Minister for the people whose rights have been taken away?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I wish the Hon. Member would revise his notion of ministerial responsibility. I can say that I take every responsibility with respect to my Department that is in line with those ministerial responsibilities.

[English]

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, the Minister would have us believe that he has been held hostage by his officials for the past year and a half as if he were a ministerial Patty Hearst. If the Minister had integrity, he would have resigned if he could not run his Department.

REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister not prepared to do the honourable thing? Instead of trying to place the blame for his abdication of responsibility on his Deputy Minister, why does he not tender his resignation now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I am aware that yesterday, the Hon. Member was busy elsewhere. I suggest that he read the answers given by the Prime Minister, and I wish to repeat what I have said to him previously, that I intend to continue to perform my duties to the best of my ability, bearing in mind the need for fair and just administration of our Income Tax Act and our tax system in general.